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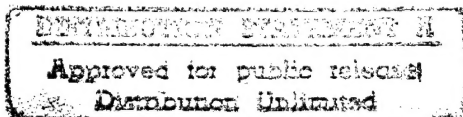
**WHO ARE THESE GUYS?
NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN HUMANITARIAN RELIEF OPERATIONS**

by

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This paper is submitted to the Joint Military Operations Department of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies.

The contents of this paper reflect my own views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Departments of the Army or Navy.



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15. Abstract: The purpose of this paper is to provide an understanding of how to deal with non-governmental organizations during a humanitarian relief operation. Examples and lessons are drawn from the following humanitarian relief operations: Provide Comfort in Northern Iraq in 1991 (helping the Kurds); Restore Hope in Somalia in 1992 and 1993; and Support Hope in Rwanda in 1994. I have described the players in humanitarian relief operations, described their interaction during the execution of relief operations, and provided some lessons learned for future relief and peacekeeping operations. An integral part of understanding of how the international relief community works is understanding the role of the various United Nations and United States agencies that coordinate relief efforts.			
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ABSTRACT

The United States Military is facing a number of new challenges as it closes out this century. One such challenge is the realization that the military will be committed to more than just conventional wars, but also Military Operations Other Than Wars (MOOTW). Closely tied to this is the growing ability of the United Nations to direct, monitor, and/or run various peacekeeping and peace enforcement missions. Operations directed at purely humanitarian assistance is on the increase as well. In the last five years, the United States Military was committed to five purely humanitarian missions, and several other operations included humanitarian assistance.

A global awareness has emerged that is focused on human rights, poverty, the sick and dying, and the hungry. This has prompted a significant increase in organizations aimed at helping underdeveloped nations and peoples. These organizations are both governmental and non-governmental. As such, a host of new players have increasingly been working side by side with military. Most, if not all, of these operations were successful, but there were a lot of growing pains. The purpose of this paper is to discuss each of these new players and provide some insight on how to improve humanitarian assistance missions for the future.

Who are these guys? Captain David Elmo, an experienced Army officer in civil/military affairs, certainly asked this question when he set up his first humanitarian relief coordination meeting in Turkey during **Operation Provide Comfort**. LTC Quentin Schaillare, a US Army officer in **Operation Support Hope**, shared these thoughts when he was assigned to the Civil Military Operations Center in Entebbe, Uganda. In fact, United States military officers involved in peace enforcement, peacekeeping, and humanitarian assistance operations around the globe have asked this and similar questions thousands of times.

Although military units have provided relief efforts to civilian casualties of war for as long as organized warfare has been around, it wasn't until recently the United States starting participating in more UN sponsored peacekeeping operations. With these new missions came a host of new players. This is especially true when organizations come together to provide humanitarian aid to the dying and suffering. Prior to the end of the Cold War military forces played a very limited role in humanitarian assistance.¹ Following the Cold War, US policy makers opened the door to a wide variety of new missions for the US military. The US military has dubbed these as Military Operations Other Than War, or MOOTW in military lexicon. One mission in this new area is humanitarian assistance.

Two new phenomena have emerged onto the international scene since the end of the Cold War. One is the increase in United Nations sponsored peacekeeping missions and the other is the

number and diversity of private volunteer organizations, or more commonly known as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). United Nations peacekeeping endeavors have reached unprecedented numbers since 1991. Since its founding in 1946, the United Nations has sponsored a total of 35 peacekeeping operations. Since 1991, there have been fifteen or 43 percent of the total.² During the same period, the number and diversity of NGOs has increased as well. In 1981 there were a little over 1,000 international NGOs. In 1995 this number skyrocketed to 21,780.³ In the United States alone, the number of NGOs registered with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) has grown from 144 in 1982 to 419 in 1994.⁴ Anyway one looks at it, this is a significant increase in a relatively short period of time.

These two phenomenon are directly related. With the UN more militarily involved globally, attention has turned to the more underdeveloped world. Since the United States supports many of these UN operations, it too has become increasingly involved in new global missions. Consequently, US military forces are more frequently working with non-governmental organizations, and here is where a potential problems lies. **Military organizations have experienced difficulty in dealing with non-governmental organizations. Lessons learned from past peacekeeping operations and an analysis of how these missions were carried out will provide insight into planning future humanitarian relief operations.**

The large number of peacekeeping operations, and the

proliferation of NGOs has caused me to limit my research. I will focus only on humanitarian operations and humanitarian agencies. My purpose is to help one understand the organizations that routinely participate in humanitarian operations, investigate how they affected three peacekeeping operations (Northern Iraq, Somalia, and Rwanda), and provide conclusions as to the best methods of dealing with various relief agencies.

Crisis Management

It would be difficult to predict the nature or the events surrounding the next humanitarian crisis. If history has taught us anything, change is the only constant. The fact that humanitarian disasters occur is not new, but the large size and the various political factors surrounding them are. There are a number of reasons that the world is more involved with humanitarian disasters. A few reasons include: decolonization, the end of the Cold War, an increase in ethnic conflicts, clashes within civilizations, the CNN phenomenon, the information revolution, and the rise in influence of the United Nations. When crises occur that cause the UN, or any nation to act, the response required is generally overwhelming. Who could forget the dying and suffering in Rwanda and Somalia that we watched on CNN in the early 1990s. Affluent nations could not idly sit by and do nothing. People needed help, and those with resources responded. Relief agencies came from all over the globe. Each, however, had their own agenda, and often only added to the chaos.

POSSIBLE ORGANIZATIONS WITH MISSION TO PROVIDE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE/AID

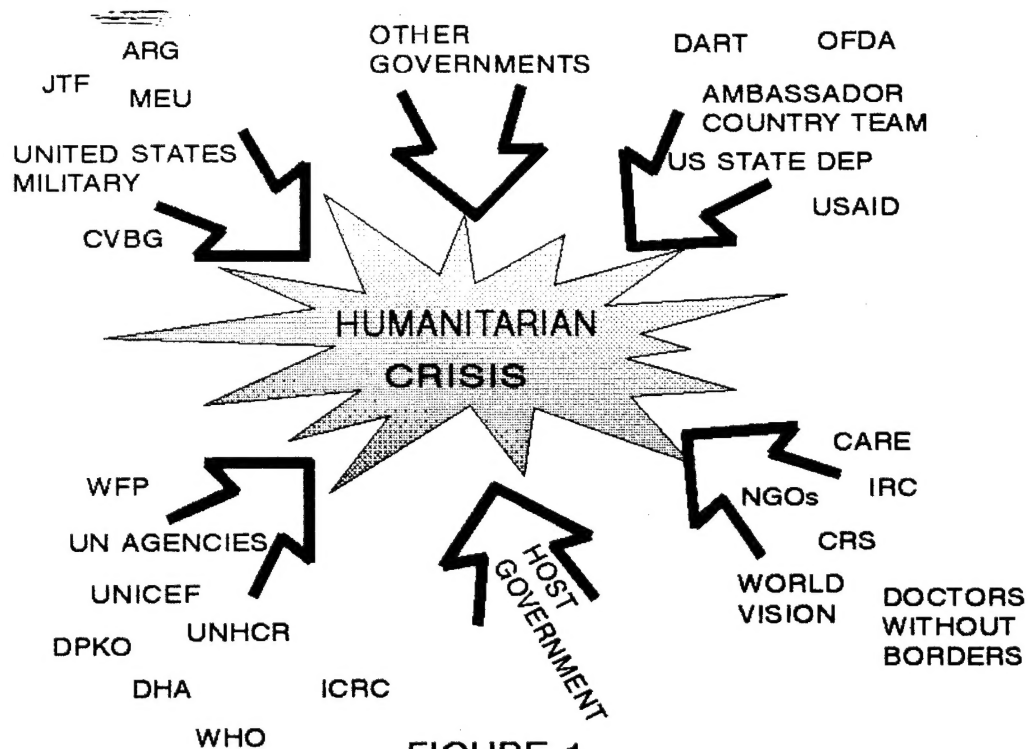


FIGURE 1

Let's take a look at who the players are. Figure 1 depicts a crisis and the broad categories of agencies that respond. Already on the scene, the host nation is already trying to deal with the problem. One sad truth is, however, that often the host nation is the cause of the problem, as was the case in Rwanda, Somalia, and Northern Iraq. Non-governmental organizations are important actors. NGOs usually are usually in country trying to prevent a crisis, and remain once it explodes. Many have the goal of working with the host government to improve living conditions, and thus have a long term commitment. As the crisis worsens, it draws the attention of the United Nations. The UN

has many different departments that work globally to assist the underdeveloped. When the United States decides the crisis is within its national interests, the State Department could respond with personnel from the Agency for International Development or establish an interagency working group to deal with the challenge. If the crisis involves massive humanitarian suffering, the President may commit US military forces. With such a hodge-podge of organizations all trying to alleviate the crisis, it's a wonder anything gets done. Remarkably, even though there is no clear organizational structure or universal hierarchy among those responding, past missions have been quite successful. As Chris Seiple put it in his recent book on the Military/NGO Relationships in Humanitarian Interventions, "the most essential element of the backdrop against which these events take place: nowhere will you find a more selfless, dedicated, and professional people than you will find at the operator level in the military and the humanitarian response community."⁵ Unfortunately, they have been required to work out relationships on the fly. We can do better than that. We can start by understanding the players involved.

NGOS

NGOs come in a wide variety of colors and forms. There are human relief, human rights, environmental, religious, educational, regionally focused, and ethnic organizations. Generally they fall into four groupings: human rights, relief, nation building or economic enhancement, and environmental.

There are a few NGOs that coordinate the efforts and provides services for other NGOs. InterAction is a classic example of this type of organization. It represents a consortium of nearly 160 NGOs in the United States.⁶ Some NGOs act as intermediaries between organizations in affluent countries and NGOs in underdeveloped countries. A good definition of an NGO has been hard to find, and those that I have found contradict each other. Therefore, combining thoughts from several sources, I provide the following definition:

a professional, trans-national, non-profit organization with its own goals and objectives, interested in improving the quality of life in various parts of the world. NGOs may be professional associations, foundations, multinational businesses, or simply groups with a common interest. Generally speaking NGOs solicit funding and/or supplies from their members or through an affiliated organization. Some NGOs are funded and/or supplied by governments.

A related term, private voluntary organization (PVO), is also in common use. Essentially a PVO is the same as an NGO, but the PVO refers to organizations based in the United States. For all practical purposes, the terms PVO and NGO are synonymous.

There is a lot more to understanding NGOs than the definition describes. First, NGOs can be powerful actors on the international scene. Some NGOs are large organizations that intimidate the countries in which they operate. For example Greenpeace boasts 4.1 million members, World Wildlife Fund, 3 million, and Amnesty International one million.⁷ Sometimes the influence an NGO can bring to bear is determined by the amount of aid it can provide. CARE and Catholic Relief Services had 1992

annual incomes of \$432 million and \$290 million respectively.⁸ In total, the NGO community in 1992 provided some \$8.3 billion in aid, representing 13 percent of developmental assistance worldwide from all sources.⁹ As governmental foreign aid decreases, NGO assistance will become even more important. Of course, NGOs can also be relatively small. Many NGO listed in the Yearbook of International Organizations are locally based NGOs that are affiliated or rely on larger NGOs for their support. Often these local NGOs, although small, provide legitimacy and are a funnel through which programs are carried out.

Closely tied with the size and annual budget of NGOs is their capabilities. Some NGOs are self contained and can carry out large scale operations, while others do not have the financial backing or the wherewithal to fully support their programs. In some relief operations, NGOs have collected large amounts of relief supplies with no means of transporting them to the region. If they can get it there by contracting an airplane, NGOs may have no means to distribute it. Some may even send ludicrous items like cold weather clothing to hot weather climates.

The bottom line is that NGOs work for their constituents: the people who voluntarily contribute funds. They have their own governing rules which are not bound to any nation or state. Contributors, like everyone else, like to know that their money goes to worthy causes. Therefore, when CNN highlights an

organization's involvement in a particular world crisis, that NGO generally receives more donations.¹⁰

Although parochial, most NGOs are apolitical. In fact, many aid agencies go to great lengths to avoid any type of political orientation. "[W]e have nothing to do with politics, private relief groups tell their contributors."¹¹ NGO leaders say they lose credibility and may jeopardize their security in a crisis if they take sides in a political struggle. Unfortunately, NGOs are drawn into politics. In a human relief crisis, aid is as good as currency, and those who have it or have access to it have power. As a result, even when these organizations refuse to take sides in a struggle, their very presence and how they carry out activities can mean success or failure for the country they are trying to help. When engaged in humanitarian relief operations, it is imperative that you understand this political dichotomy.

NGOs can be powerful lobbyists. In the United States they routinely take their cause to Capitol Hill. They provide information and pressure policy makers to make decisions which support their goals and objectives. NGOs will pressure decision makers to declare an region an emergency area so funds and assets can be directed at the crisis. InterAction did this when they met with President Clinton regarding the situation in Rwanda.¹²

NGOs espouse a wide variety of political beliefs. Most US based NGOs support the United States Government in its goals, policies, and programs, but there are some who attack it. Remember that NGOs represent their constituents and carry out

programs in support of their constituent's goals and agenda. It would be impossible and impractical to categorize NGOs as pro or anti American. The best guide is to look at their past performance, and if that is not possible contact the US Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID works closely and tracks many NGOs with whom they work. When dealing with a particular NGO in military operations, it is imperative one understands the organizations' size, goals, political orientation, and capabilities.

Most NGOs, at least those you will encounter in a relief operation, are officially sanctioned by the United Nations. Recently, the UN realized how important NGOs are to international situations. This is probably due to the fact that NGOs like Catholic Relief Services, World Vision, International Rescue Committee, and CARE provide as much or more aid than does the United Nations.¹³ The UN feels so strongly about NGOs that in 1988 it passed a General Assembly resolution recognizing the important contribution NGOs make in dealing with crises.¹⁴

As I mentioned before, the United States government keeps track of some NGOs because the United States Agency for International Development funnels money and relief commodities to NGOs for international development missions. In 1992, this amounted to \$1.5 billion dollars going to 231 organizations.¹⁵ To receive money or commodities for relief purposes, NGOs must be registered with USAID and receive at least 20 percent of their funding from private sources. They must also be non-profit

entities; receive voluntary contributions of money or staff time from the public; be engaged in charitable development assistance operations overseas of a nonreligious nature; and submit projects for approval to USAID.¹⁶

International Organizations

Other players on the international humanitarian assistance scene are the international organizations (IOs). These are generally governmental organizations which provide monies, commodities, and/or coordination to an international crisis. The most notable IOs are the various governments that support relief efforts and the United Nations. There is one very special IO, and that is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). For all practical purposes, the ICRC is a non-governmental organization with special status afforded it by the Geneva Convention, therefore it is considered an international organization.¹⁷

USAID

I have already mentioned that the United States Agency for International Development can provide funding and commodities to NGOs. USAID, however, can play a much more significant role, especially when looking at a crisis from the military perspective.

USAID is the principal agency of the United States Government for dealing with declared natural and manmade disasters worldwide. Through its office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), it administers the US President's authority to

provide emergency relief and humanitarian assistance. USAID responds to a crises when it is declared an emergency by either the State Department or a US Ambassador.¹⁸ This amounts to approximately 65-75 events per year.¹⁹

The OFDA responds to emergencies by sending out Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART) to the affected area. DARTs can be very valuable in dealing with a crisis. They are experienced crisis veterans. They are well known to the NGO community, are a source of funds, come extremely well organized with their own global communications, and, most importantly, can represent US policy in the affected region.²⁰

In most countries where the United States has an embassy headed by an ambassador, there may be a representative from USAID on the Ambassador's staff.²¹ In such cases, the Ambassador calls the shots, but the coordinating agency for American humanitarian relief effort will be the USAID representative.

United Nations

As I said earlier, UN peacekeeping operations are on the increase. Thomas Weiss, a renowned scholar on humanitarian interventions, says we are on the brink of a new era where the world is reacting to more humanitarian crises.²² Before the UN gets involved in an international crisis, the Security Council passes a resolution stating objectives and direction. Then it is up to the Secretary General to carry out the stated actions. Inside the structure of the UN are a number of departments that loosely work for the Secretary General. The most active of these

include: the World Food Program (WFP), the Development Program (UNDP), the International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Department of Peacekeeping (DPKO), and the Department of Humanitarian Assistance (DHA). Many of these departments receive private funding. For example, UNICEF is entirely financed from private sources.

During a crisis, the Secretary General normally appoints one of the UN agencies to be the lead. This does not mean that the other agencies won't be involved, but does stipulate who is in charge. In Northern Iraq, the UNHCR had the lead; in Rwanda, the Secretary General gave the DHA the lead while the UNHCR the lead in Zaire, Tanzania, and Uganda.²³

Lessons Learned from Past Humanitarian Relief Operations

I have chosen to review three recent cases involved with humanitarian assistance: Provide Comfort (1991, in Northern Iraq), Restore Hope (1992-3 in Somalia), and Support Hope (1994 in Rwanda). All these operations were successful. As a result much was drawn from them. The results of these operations can be summarized by the following bumper stickers: Provide Comfort - sorting it out on the run, Restore Hope - learning the hard way, and Support Hope - fine tuning past lessons. I have chosen not to describe each of the operations in detail, but only draw lessons from them. There are six areas to be discussed: establishing a good military/NGO relationships, understanding the value of USAID, understanding the role of the United Nations

agencies, mission analysis so as to establish the proper focus, ensuring the operation has an effective Civil Military Operations Centers (CMOC), and determining how to phase out of a humanitarian relief operation.

Military/NGO Relationships

The relationship between the United States military and non-governmental organizations has come a long way since these two communities first encountered each other in Operation Provide Comfort. Provide Comfort was the first time since Vietnam that NGOs and the military had worked side by side. With the rapid explosion of the NGO community and a new generation of military leaders, this was for all practical purposes a first encounter.

Initially, there was mistrust and skepticism on both sides. The military saw the NGOs as an undisciplined rag-tag group with no clear organization or direction. The NGOs, on the other hand saw the military as an armed very rigid organization more interested in shooting weapons than providing succor. There were also cultural differences. One NGO member described himself as a "child of the 60s and 70s."²⁴ This brought back the clash between those against the war in Vietnam and those in favor of it. Individuals who sought out organizations like NGOs were more than likely members of the peace movement, while those who sought the military were of the "my country right or wrong" ilk. Memories of incidents such as Kent State, widened this gap between these two ideologies.

As Provide Comfort got underway, the NGOs and soldiers,

sailors, airmen, and marines were thrust into a humanitarian crisis together. Both had similar missions to accomplish. As such, the professional attitude that Chris Seiple pointed out prevailed. Provide Comfort was a crisis that no one anticipated. There were no NGOs previously in the region, and the military was the first to arrive. The military was unquestionably in charge of the operation, and most NGOs fell in on their lead. For the military commanders, the end state was to eventually turn over the entire operation to the UN and the NGOs. As the crisis improved, the NGOs formed their own coordination council, the NGO Coordination Committee for Northern Iraq (NCCNI). This was an important step for an effective transition.

In the end, Provide Comfort was a positive experience for the military/NGO relationship. The military had the resources and capabilities to move large quantities of supplies to remote regions and provide security in what could have been a hostile environment. The NGOs brought their wealth of experience in helping people help themselves.

If Provide Comfort was a positive experience, then Operations Provide Relief and Restore Hope in Somalia were neutral or negative experiences. First, some NGOs had been in Somalia for a long period of time and understood the dynamics of the situation. During the first phase of the US intervention, there was relatively little NGO to military interface. Provide Relief was essentially an airlift operation with the military operating out of Kenya and moving needed supplies into critical

areas in Somalia. Once supplies were on the ground, the NGOs had to distribute them.²⁵ The mission was quite successful. During a six month period, the Joint Task Force (JTF) delivered 28,000 metric tons of cargo.²⁶

Even with the large influx of aid given by Provide Relief, the situation in Somalia remained critical. Consequently, the United States, in concert with the UN, started Operation Restore Hope. This was an attempt to solve the problem in Somalia on a much larger scale, and it once again put the military and the NGOs side by side. The Unified Task Force (UNITAF) involved 38,000 soldiers from 21 nations.²⁷ At the start of the operation, there were a total of 49 UN and private relief groups (NGOs) in country, and this grew to over 90 NGOs by the time the US pulled out.²⁸

There were numerous problems between the NGOs and the military. In the end, the mission was accomplished and the dying and suffering was alleviated. Some problems included lack of coordination, limited communication and sharing of information, disagreements on where and when to provide the needed supplies, a continued mistrust of one another, and methods of dealing with the Somali people. In the beginning, there was even a perceived role reversal. The NGOs provided their own security forces by hiring local Somali gunman, and the military was gave relief support to the population.

In the two years between Restore Hope in Somalia and Support Hope in Rwanda many lessons were definitely learned. From the

start of Support Hope the military recognized the value of the NGOs. When COL Karl Farris was told he would lead the Civil Military Operations Center in Kigali, Rwanda, he immediately called several senior NGO leaders to get information on the situation. This was the first time the military had asked the NGO community for advice.²⁹

Additionally the establishment of three CMOCs that were collocated with the UN operations centers greatly facilitated coordination between the NGOs and the military. The military had also recognized its role as a facilitator and supportor (to be described later) and let the UN representatives set priorities.³⁰ Even so, life was not all roses. The NGOs did not like the security establishments arranged by the military, but recognized its necessity.

In relatively short order, the military, the UN agencies, and the NGOs coordinated a massive relief effort and restored order to the chaotic situation in Rwanda. The military's mission was complete in 60 days and they departed the area leaving the mission to the UN and the NGOs.

Role of USAID

The role of Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART) from the US Agency for International Development was significant. These are professional relief workers who understand the NGOs and administer US policy. Because of past peacekeeping experiences and interagency training exercises they work well with the military. In Provide Comfort, USAID immediately sent in a DART.

One team member, Fred Cuny, was the mover and shaker behind the scenes. Cuny, a former marine and president of a humanitarian consulting firm took the lead in coordinating relief efforts. He worked closely with the four UN agencies that responded, as well as members of the 60 NGOs which came to support the operation.³¹ The DART recognized the military had the lead in the operation, but also understood that it would soon leave once the situation stabilized. Cuny provided valuable advice to military commanders and was key to the successful transition from military to civilian control.

In Provide Relief and Restore Hope in Somalia, the DART teams were present and tried to take an active role, but were hampered by lack of personnel and internal problems in the UN. During the early stages, DART representatives radioed information concerning when and where relief supplies would be delivered by air from Kenya into Somalia. During Restore Hope, the DART worked with the UN agencies in coordinating relief efforts. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs had the lead for the UN and the DART recognized them as the coordinating agency for relief efforts.³² The DART members worked closely with the NGOs in bridging the gap between the military and the various UN agencies.

When operation Support Hope in Rwanda got underway, USAID found its niche. Instead of sending in one DART team, USAID sent several. The military set up three different CMOCs and each had its DART liaison representatives. Additionally, the senior USAID

representative, Tom Frye, was the JTF Commander's advisor for humanitarian relief. Frye went everywhere with LTG Daniel R. Schoeder.³³

Role of the United Nations

For the UN, the lessons learned from Provide Comfort to Support Hope were evolutionary. Although the Secretary General designated a lead agency for each operation, their effectiveness was dramatically different. In Provide Comfort the lead agency was the UNHCR. The distinct lack of information about what the UNHCR did during the early stages of this operation indicates they only observed. In the end, however, they did take over coordinating relief efforts, but the NGO community was well organized and had developed its own internal coordination committee.

The Secretary General appointed the brand new Department of Humanitarian Affairs to handle the situation in Somalia.³⁴ Under its direction the UN established a Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) in Mogadishu. The HOC was collocated with the military CMOC and provided coordination for other UN agencies and NGOs. A number of factors made the HOC less effective than it could have been. Reasons for this are: the military's failure to recognize the value of the CMOC; the situation in Somalia was very complex; and this was the first time the UN had taken charge of such a mission.

By the time the UN got to Rwanda, they understood what they needed to do. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs had the

lead in Rwanda while the UNHCR had the lead in Zaire, Tanzania, and Uganda. The UN established several On-site Operations Coordination Centers (OSOCC) to facilitate timely and efficient delivery of humanitarian relief. The OSOCC held bi-weekly meetings attended by many of the over sixty NGOs in Rwanda, and established relief priorities and exchanged information.³⁵ The US military recognized this role and provided a liaison officer to the OSOCC.³⁶

Mission Analysis/Focus

The US military also learned its lessons as well. For all operations, the military conducts a careful mission analysis to determine what it needs to do. In all three of the cases, the political leadership initially provided the same guidance, "stop the dying." As the military planners analyzed each situation they not only received more guidance, but gradually had to alter their focus. Provide Comfort was a straight forward military mission with the military in charge. The situation was essentially the same in Somalia once Restore Hope began. By the time Support Hope came around, there was a change in focus. LTG Schoeder, the JTF Commander, did his own analysis of the situation, and based on his review of every bit of guidance he received and every speech by senior political leaders, he determined his role was to facilitate and support relief agencies.³⁷ In a mature humanitarian operation where other international organizations clearly have the lead, then this is a very appropriate mission for the military.

Civil Military Operations Center

The most important lesson learned by the military was the value of the Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC). CMOCs have been in the Army's command and control process for years, but with the advent of humanitarian operations, they have taken on a whole new meaning. Ten or more years back the CMOC coordinated with civil agencies in restoring order to war-torn regions. In humanitarian operations, the CMOC is the focal point for military operations. This lesson was clearly learned in each of the cases.

In Provide Comfort, the CMOC was manned and staffed by experienced civil affairs officers. Captain David Elmo was one of these. Since the military was there first, he realized he had to coordinate the efforts of the numerous NGOs that were flowing into Turkey. Under the auspices of the UNHCR, he started having daily coordination meetings with the NGOs. Initially it was chaotic, but eventually more and more NGOs learned what the military could do and started attending. In short order, the CMOC began prioritizing and synchronizing relief efforts.³⁸

The military leadership running Restore Hope recognized a need for the CMOC and established one in Mogadishu. Through Herculean efforts by two Marine colonels much was accomplished; but the JTF Commander and his operations center did not realize the hub of all relief efforts had to be the CMOC. This did not go unnoticed. During Support Hope, the JTF Commander and his staff recognized the importance of this critical node. In fact,

LTG Schoeder had not one CMOC, but three. Two of these CMOCs worked directly for him.³⁹ These three CMOCs also recognized that the UN was in charge and worked closely with the OSOCC in coordinating relief efforts. The UN directly dealt with the NGOs. With this arrangement there was very little NGO/military coordination. LTC Quentin Schallare was a US Army officer assigned to the CMOC in Entebbe. After he figured out who was who, he worked closely with the UN agencies.⁴⁰

Phasing Out of a Humanitarian Relief Mission

Drawing from the lessons learned in the three cases discussed, I want to now turn to how best can the military interact with non-governmental organizations and ultimately phase out of the operation. As I have outlined in any humanitarian emergency, there are numerous players all with the same missions of providing humanitarian assistance. Commanders must recognize that the end state of the operations is turning over command and control of the humanitarian mission to either the State Department, the United Nations, or the NGOs. The military cannot solve underlying causes of a crisis, but can provide security, stabilize the situation, and buy time for others to address the root causes. The question is: How does one do this?

First, most humanitarian crises are chaotic. Therefore, the need for the military is great. What the military does best is to take charge of the crisis, quickly bring in the necessary support, and begin stabilizing the situation. If no relief agencies are present or ready to accept control of the relief

effort, the military has the capability to do this itself. In the end, however, the military must turn over the relief effort to other governmental organizations to solve the root causes of the crisis. The cases analyzed clearly depict such an arrangement.

Carrying this analogy several steps further, the mission of the USAID, the United Nations, and the NGOs is essentially the same - turn over the mission to the host government. When the crisis evaporates, the people must run things themselves with the host government facilitating and assisting them through a variety of governmental programs. So how does one get there?

To begin with, at the height of the crisis the military should be the lead agency. It will be assisted by the DART, and together guide the efforts of the UN agencies and NGOs. As soon as the DART or a UN agency is ready, the military should relinquish command and control of humanitarian operations to them. This should be done in a relatively short period of time (30 days at the most). Then the military will change its focus to facilitating and supporting the international relief organizations. Missions at this point would include providing security, transportation assets, medical support, and engineer assets. As the situation continues to improve the military will turn over all missions to other organizations and phase completely out. Figure 2 outlines this concept.

This same model can be applied to the role of the DART, the UN agencies and the non-governmental agencies. The only

difference is the amount of time each organizations remains committed. For NGOs this may take years. The end result is to

PHASING OUT OF A HUMANITARIAN CRISES

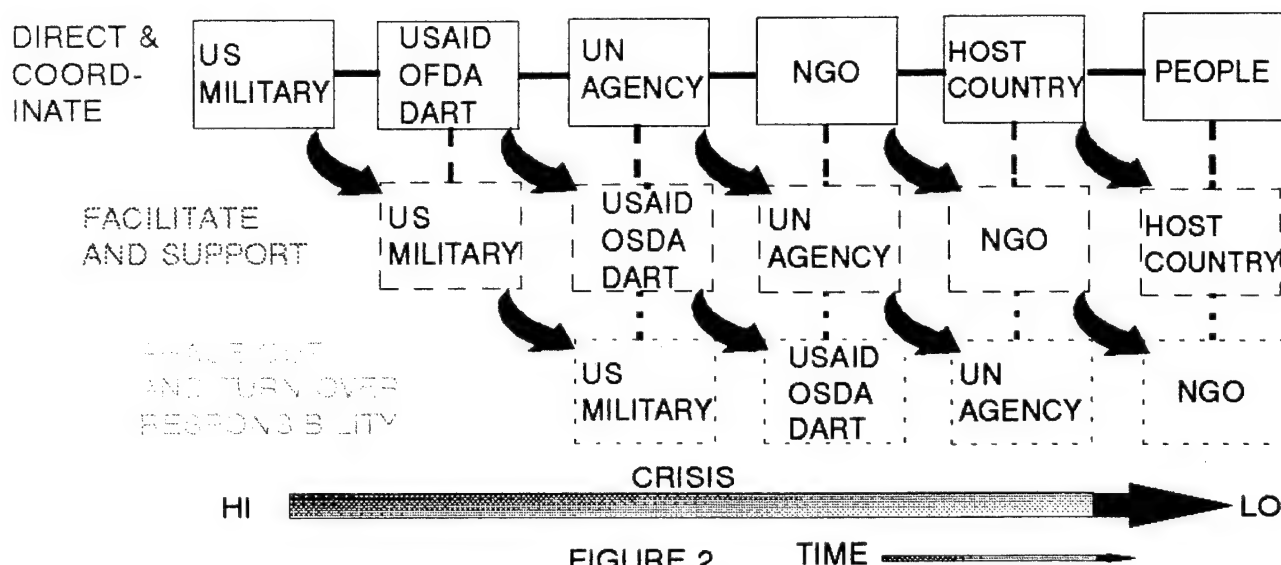


FIGURE 2

turn it all over to the people and their government. Each relief agency must evolve through the process of directing and coordinating the relief effort, facilitating and supporting the effort, and phasing out.

The cases all went through these various stages of this model. Provide Comfort was a situation where no established relief efforts were in place. The military took charge and then gradually phased out. In Somalia, the NGOs and some UN agencies were well established. UNITAF should have realized this immediately, and moved quickly to a facilitate and support focus. LTG Schoeder understood this in Rwanda and thus began his mission

on the right foot.

If history has told us anything, change is the only constant, and the next relief operation will have its own unique challenges. We would be fools, however, if we did not learn from history. By drawing from historical cases, I hope I have given military commanders and planners some insight on how to deal with relief agencies. The lessons of Northern Iraq, Somalia, and Rwanda have greatly facilitated our understanding of humanitarian assistance. We must keep in mind the roles, missions and capabilities of the various international relief agencies; how to interact with the various players; the need for a careful mission analysis so we enter the mission with the right focus; the value of a well functioning Civil Military Operations Centers; and how and when to transition to a new phase of support. If we do this, then the US units assigned humanitarian assistance can be more successful than the previous missions.

I would like to leave you with a couple more thoughts. The time for learning how to deal with the various relief agencies is not in a time of crisis. Learning must be part of our normal training environment. Many NGOs and International Organizations I talked to are willing to participate in training exercises. Currently, many Joint Staffs are conducting interagency training exercises to establish strong working relationships. Additionally, the Joint Readiness Training Center routinely includes NGOs, and DARTs in its training scenarios. Through these kinds of exercises we will definitely learn the lessons I have described as well as many more.

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